

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

A listing of the claims presented in this patent application appears below. This listing replaces all prior versions and listing of claims in this patent application.

Claim 1 (currently amended): A process for the production of ~~alcohol~~ tequila ~~from the leaves of the blue agave plant~~[[,]] which ~~comprise~~ comprises the following steps:

a) chopping ~~reduce the size of t~~ leaves obtained from a blue agave plant to form chopped blue agave plant leaves;

b) ~~add~~ adding water to the chopped blue agave plant leaves to form ~~a water leaf mixture~~ an aqueous leaf extract;

c) macerating the aqueous leaf extract ~~subject the water leaf mixture from step b) to maceration to shred the tissues of the leaves and~~ release sugars;

d) mixing the sugars from step c) with sugars obtained from piñas in the production of tequila to form a sugar mixture; and

[[d)] e) fermenting ~~subject the sugar mixture~~ ~~sugars obtained from step [[c)]]~~ d) to ~~alcohol fermentation and yeast microbial cell growth to produce alcohol~~ tequila.

Claims 2 and 3 (canceled).

Claim 4 (currently amended): [[A]] The process according to claim 1, wherein ~~sufficient water is added in step b) so that~~ the ratio of chopped blue agave leaves to water ranges from about 2:1 to 4:1.

Claim 5 (currently amended): [[A]] The process according to claim 1, wherein nutrients are added to the water in step b).

Claim 6 (currently amended): [[A]] The process according to claim 5, wherein the nutrients are selected from the group consisting of sucrose, ammonium sulfate, ammonium phosphate, magnesium sulfate, inulinase, and mixtures thereof.

Application No. 10/005,873

Claim 7 (currently amended): [[A]] The process according to claim 1, wherein fermentation in step [[d)] e) is carried out by adding yeast to the sugar ~~macerated~~ mixture from step [[c)] d), and allowing the sugar ~~resulting~~ mixture to ferment for 1 to 5 days to produce ethanol.